Prepared for Growth:

BUILDING ALBERTA'S LABOUR SUPPLY

REPORT TO ALBERTANS

MAY 2004

Alberta

GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

105-02140/

In November 2001, the provincial labour strategy report, *Prepared for Growth: Building Alberta's Labour Supply*, was released. It described the provincial government's plan to ensure Alberta has enough skilled workers to meet industry demand.

Three key strategies were identified:

- increase the skill and knowledge levels of Albertans;
- increase the mobility of labour in Canada; and
- increase the number of immigrants to Alberta.

Both "Actions Underway" and "New Actions" were outlined for each of the three key strategies.
www.gov.ab.ca/hre/lmi/pdf/growth.pdf

Released in February 2003, the *Year One Report To Albertans* summarized key accomplishments under the *Prepared for Growth* strategies.
www.gov.ab.ca/hre/lmi/pdf/growth_year1.pdf

The Alberta government continues to take action to ensure Albertans have the information, services and training opportunities they need to plan careers and find and keep jobs.

Actions identified as underway in the original *Prepared for Growth* report continue. As well, new programs and initiatives ensure that Alberta's workforce is prepared for the future.

2004 Report to Albertans

This booklet, *Report to Albertans*, provides a complete accounting of what the Alberta government accomplished under each new action identified in the original *Prepared for Growth* and reports on additional new initiatives underway.

INCREASE THE SKILL AND KNOWLEDGE LEVELS OF ALBERTANS

In the original *Prepared for Growth* report, five new actions were identified.

1. Develop a data warehouse to provide easier access to credible, timely and consistent workplace, labour market and income support information.

Update

- By providing quality workplace and labour market information, the Strategic Information Environment data warehouse helps Alberta Human Resources and Employment make programming decisions that are client-focused and meet employer needs.
- The new Aboriginal Labour Force Survey www.gov.ab.ca/hre/lfstats/index.asp and Regional Occupational Forecasts www.gov.ab.ca/hre/lmi/lmjobs.asp enhance public access to credible and timely labour market information.

2. Place greater emphasis on additional occupational training in areas of labour market demand for Employment Insurance clients under the Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA).

Update

- Introduced the Skills Investment Strategy to place greater emphasis on occupationally-focused skills training for adults.
- In Alberta, under the LMDA:
  - 13,218 Employment Insurance eligible apprentices began training in 2002/03, an increase of 8 per cent from the 12,259 apprentices in 2001/02; and

- 5,230 Employment Insurance eligible clients began short term skills training in 2002/03, an increase of more than 28 per cent from the 4,064 clients who started in 2001/02.

3. Encourage the federal government to increase the level of spending under Employment Insurance Part II to provide additional training support to a wider range of people.

Update

- The Forum of Labour Market Ministers identified priorities to strengthen skills and learning in Canada. Alberta took a lead role with the federal government and other provinces and territories in developing work plans including recommending increased federal funding for career information, skills preparation and occupational training.

4. Improve the transitions of youth from school to work, with a focus on areas experiencing skill shortages.

Update

- Promotion and distribution of existing career information activities to Alberta teachers, counsellors, students and public was increased. This included building awareness of Canada Career Week, *Canada Prospects*, the Building Tomorrow Today consultation, and the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website.
- The Alberta government increased the delivery of student finance information workshops to teachers, counsellors, students and parents.

5. Develop and distribute an information resource that encourages employers to hire from non-traditional sources, such as persons with disabilities, Aboriginal people, youth, older workers, visible minorities and immigrants. This resource would also help employers prepare to manage a diverse workforce.

Update

- The Alberta government released *Diversity: A strategy to meet your need for skilled workers* in April 2002. www.alis.gov.ab.ca/pdf/cshop/Diversity.pdf
- New information resources have been produced and are available online at www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop.

Additional Initiatives

In addition to addressing the five new actions in the original *Prepared for Growth* report, the Alberta government also undertook additional actions to help build the skill and knowledge levels of Albertans.

- In 2003, eCampus Alberta began to provide Alberta's post-secondary students with access to on-line courses offered by 15 publicly funded colleges and technical institutes throughout Alberta. The Alberta government contributed $900,000 in one-time funds to start the project.
- The Alberta government allocated $40 million in new access funding for 2003/04 to address demand in priority areas such as medical education and training programs.

- Alberta continues to make progress in reducing workplace injuries or lost-time claim rates. This contributes to a more productive labour force. For example:
  - The goal of Work Safe Alberta is to reduce the workplace injury rate by 40 per cent by the end of 2004. The rate for 2003 is the lowest rate ever recorded. The Occupational Injuries and Diseases in Alberta 2002 Summary can be accessed at www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/statistics.asp
- The First Nations, Metis and Inuit Education Policy Framework to improve Aboriginal learner success was implemented. www.learning.gov.ab.ca/nativeed/nativepolicy
- The Alberta government partnered to create the Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project (AAAP) linking employers with potential Aboriginal apprentices. Continuing into its second year, the project has registered over 60 apprentices.
- An Aboriginal Communication Strategy was developed to build awareness of careers in the trades among Aboriginal youth. The strategy includes Aboriginal youth ambassadors, a role model program, and two guides for Alberta junior high and senior high schools: *Step Into the Trades* for students, and *Guide for Career Counsellors and Educators*.
- The Youth Apprenticeship Project was initiated to increase awareness of careers in the trades or agriculture for students in grades 7 to 12.
- Funding was provided to the Alberta Food Processors Association to support skill development and to enhance human resource practices.
- The Alberta government partnered to support the establishment of the Institute for Food, Agri-Industrial, and Agricultural Sciences Alberta to manage and deliver agriculture, agri-food and agri-industrial research and education programs.

- The Comprehensive Health Workforce Plan for nursing, human resources management and health economics was established. The plan focuses on ensuring accessible, quality, patient-focused care for Albertans and a sustainable health care system.
- New immigration and educational initiatives support the supply of licensed health professionals to provide quality health services in the province, focusing in rural areas.
- Produced *Finders & Keepers: Recruitment and Retention Strategies*, a new resource in the series of publications for Alberta employers.
  www.alis.gov.ab.ca/pdf/cshop/FindersKeepers.pdf

INCREASE THE MOBILITY OF LABOUR IN CANADA

The Alberta government continues to take steps to address the three new actions identified in *Prepared for Growth*.

1. Develop a campaign to inform out-of-province workers about the *Alberta Advantage*, including the high quality of life.

Update

- Working to generate positive media coverage promoted the Alberta Advantage without the need to develop a formal campaign.
- *A Comparison on Personal Taxes and Cost of Living in Alberta, Canada and the United States* was released to help promote the advantages of living and working in Alberta.
  www.alberta-canada.com/statpub/reports.cfm

2. Encourage stronger efforts by provincial and territorial governments, and provincial and national regulatory bodies, to ensure compliance with the requirements of the labour mobility chapter of the Agreement on Internal Trade.

Update

- Alberta continues to work closely with governments and regulatory bodies across Canada to enhance compliance with the Labour Mobility Chapter of the Agreement on Internal Trade. To date, agreements cover almost 97 per cent of Canadian workers employed in regulated occupations. This helps ensure that these workers' credentials are equally recognized throughout Canada. www.gov.ab.ca/hre/profsandoccs/canada.asp

3. Explore developing a cooperative arrangement among the federal government, the Government of Alberta and industry to encourage skilled workers in Canada to temporarily relocate to Alberta to help meet short-term labour needs.

Update

- As Alberta continues to lead in attracting interprovincial migrants a formal arrangement amongst governments and industry was not deemed necessary.
- The existing Canada-Alberta Job Order Bank Service continues to support movement of workers across Canada. www.gov.ab.ca/hre/jobs/

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS

Five new actions are being addressed by government as identified in *Prepared for Growth*.

1. Develop a campaign to attract out-of-country workers emphasizing the Alberta Advantage, including the high quality of life.

Update

- Alberta was promoted as a destination for potential skilled worker immigrants during missions to United Kingdom and Germany.
- Programs in California targeted information, communications and technology workers to attract both foreign workers and Canadians living there.

2. Encourage professional bodies to offer qualifying exams in foreign countries, allowing skilled workers to arrive with recognized credentials.

Update

- The Alberta government continues to work with employers to ensure that foreign skilled trades people recruited by companies under the federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program have their trade credentials recognized prior to working in Alberta.
- The Alberta government, together with post-secondary institutions and the federal government, is exploring pilot projects for overseas academic assessment and training that would assist potential immigrants to use their skills in Alberta's labour market.

3. Introduce a pilot Alberta Provincial Nominee Program, a targeted out-of-country recruitment program to attract workers in key occupations experiencing shortages.

Update

- The Alberta Provincial Nominee Program which began in March 2002 was extended to March 2005 and expanded from 400 to 800 provincial nominee foreign workers due in part to employer demand.
  - As of December 31, 2003 the program has enabled pre-approved employers in Alberta to hire 365 skilled workers. www.alberta-canada.com/pnp

4. Promote awareness and better use of the temporary foreign worker program, and faster processing of temporary work visas.

Update

- The Alberta government partnered to produce a step-by-step brochure to aid Alberta employers in the application process and ensure more efficient processing by the federal government under the federal Temporary Foreign Worker program. www.learning.gov.ab.ca/immigration/tempforeignworkers.pdf

5. Support the expansion of foreign students' work opportunities while in Canada.

Update

- As of October 2003, the *Canada-Alberta Agreement on Post-Graduation Employment for Foreign Students* allows for longer working opportunities for foreign students employed by an Alberta employer. www.learning.gov.ab.ca/news/2003/October/nr-SkilledImmigrants.asp

Additional Initiatives

In addition to addressing the five new actions in the original *Prepared for Growth* report, the Alberta government continues to work on initiatives to increase the number of immigrants coming to Alberta to help meet the increasing demand for skilled workers.

- In October 2003, the Alberta and federal governments signed an agreement to allow for priority processing of study permits for international students to attend designated Alberta post-secondary institutions.
  www.learning.gov.ab.ca/news/2003/October/nr-SkilledImmigrants.asp
- The Alberta government, with input from over 40 stakeholder organizations, is developing a strategy to improve integration of skilled immigrants into Alberta's economy.
- *CERTinfo: Certification and Registration Requirements for Employment in Alberta*, is a new resource to assist both prospective immigrants and people already in Alberta to utilize their skills in the Alberta labour market.
  www.alis.gov.ab.ca/certinfo

Looking Ahead

The Alberta government is committed to continued growth and prosperity and recognizes that Alberta's labour market must be competitive in the global market. We will continue to work on initiatives with our stakeholders, including industry and government, and will keep Albertans informed of our efforts to refresh Alberta's labour market strategy.

For more information, to share your feedback on this report or for additional printed copies, contact:

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An electronic version of this report is available at
www.gov.ab.ca/hre/lmi/lmstrategy.asp

Labour force statistics and information as well as labour market programs and services are available at www.gov.ab.ca/hre, www.alis.gov.ab.ca or through Service Alberta at www.gov.ab.ca.

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